

Message Text

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12
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /083 W
----- 116038

P R 080922Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8875

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL GOTEBORG BY POUCH

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 5563

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAMH: PINT, SW
SUBJECT: NEW SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER APPOINTED

1. NEW SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER THORBJORN FALLDIN HAS NAMED SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF HIS CENTER PARTY KARIN SODER AS HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. SODER IS THE FIRST WOMEN TO EVER HOLD THE POSITION AND IS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE CHOICE. SPECULATION HAD BEEN THAT SHE WOULD BE APPOINTED SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER.

2. KARIN SODER BECAME SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTER PARTY IN 1971, AT THE SAME TIME FALLDIN ASSUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP. SHE AND FALLDIN HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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WORKED TOGETHER AT LEAST SINCE THEIR DAYS IN THE

CENTER PARTY YOUTH MOVEMENT, AND SHE IS INVOLVED
IN MOST OF THE TOP-LEVEL DECISIONS WITHIN THE
PARTY.

3. BORN IN 1928, SHE QUALIFIED AS AN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TEACHER IN 1950 AND HAS LIVED IN THE
STOCKHOLM AREA SINCE 1954. SHE STUDIED POLITICAL
SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS IN 1963-64, AND IS PRESENTLY
A CAREERS TEACHER IN HER LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT.
SODER IS MARRIED AND HAS THREE CHILDREN. HER
HUSBAND GUNNAR, A BUSINESSMAN, WAS ONE OF
EX-CENTER PARTY LEADER HEDLUND'S CLOSEST ADVISORS,
AND MAINTAINS INTIMATE CONTACT WITH THE CENTER
PARTY LEADERSHIP.

4. A MEMBER OF THE RIKSDAG SINCE 1971, SODER
HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, THE FOREIGN POLICY
BOARD, AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE. PREVIOUSLY SHE
WAS LARGEY ACTIVE IN PARTY AFFAIRS AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION
QUESTIONS. IN THE RIKSDAG, SHE HAS BEEN
ESPECIALLY INFLUENTIAL IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION,
FAMILY POLICY, AND TAXATION POLICY AND HAS A
REPUTATION FOR BEING A TOUGH AND ENERGETIC
LEGISLATOR.

5. SODER APPARENTLY SPEAKS ENGLISH AND PROBABLY
ANOTHER LANGUAGE, SINCE FIRST CHOICE FOR THE POST,
FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN JOHANNES ANTONSSON (WHO WAS
APPOINTED MINISTER OF COMMUNES) DECLINED PRIMARILY
ON GROUNDS OF HIS DIFFICULTY WITH LANGUAGES. AS
ONE WHOSE PRIMARY INTERESTS HAVE BEEN IN AREAS
OTHER THAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SODER'S VIEWS ON FOREIGN
POLICY ARE AS YET UNCERTAIN, EVEN TO THOSE IN THE
FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STOCKH05563
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760380-0236
From: STOCKHOLM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761065/aaaaceup.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2004 by barnescd>; APPROVED <14 DEC 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER APPOINTED
TAGS: PINT, SW, (SODER, KARIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006